



via certified mail and email
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Ms. Carolyn Bridges, Director
Office of Magnet, Choice, and Charter Schools
School Board of Polk County
P.O. Box 391
Bartow, Florida 33831

7 February 2012
revised 23 March 2012

Dear Mrs. Bridges:

Kindly note that we are providing additional information to our letter dated 7 February 2012 regarding the charter initiative for Harrison School for the Arts, as detailed below.

Entity in Charge. The Board of the Harrison Parents' Association, Inc. ("HPA") in conjunction with the Harrison Advisory Board has been evaluating charter status for Harrison School for the Arts. The Boards have carefully and systematically evaluated the available options. These options have included the status quo as well as various charter options.

Board Decision. The HPA Board of Directors has obtained legal advice and has agreed to operate carefully and in strict compliance with Florida Charter Law. At its regularly- scheduled meeting on March 20 of this year, the Board voted unanimously to apply for charter status as a start-up charter school.

Applicant. The applicant for charter status will be the HPA, a Florida not-for-profit corporation and a qualified 501(c)(3) organization under federal tax laws.

Teacher and Parent Votes. Formal teacher and parent votes are required for conversion status, but are not part of the process for start-up status. Nonetheless, teachers and parents have been involved from the beginning in the exploratory process, and both have evidenced a strong consensus in support of the vote for independent status. According to the law, the determinative vote for moving ahead has to come from the Board of the entity making the application, and that vote has occurred.

Facilities. The Harrison start-up charter school has a significant advantage over the position occupied by most start-ups. The Harrison facilities are already in place and the previously-held school number appears on the DOE website. The facilities were produced as the result of a successful partnership with the private sector and serve today as an achievement on the part of the District School Board and its ability to work productively with the private sector. The HPA

Board has taken the initiative to consult with the county-wide donor base that has been so important in the original creation of the facilities and subsequent expansion. They have emphasized that their donor intent was for the facilities to serve the special needs of gifted and talented students in the arts across Polk County as a whole.

Curriculum. The HPA has organized the planning for the school structure into an overall task force comprised of 3 focused committees (Business Plan, Educational Plan, and Organizational Plan). One of the three committees is devoted to the curriculum. The Task Force is heavily manned by existing Harrison teachers. It is anticipated that the arts curriculum will remain and be enhanced as the state-of-the-art arts curriculum that the Harrison School is known for today. The task force committee has several options for supplying the all-important academic curriculum to complement its arts curriculum. The decision will be driven by which of these options best serves the needs of the students.

Community Support. The HPA is composed of parents, teachers, and community members. The HPA has been using the past several months to meet with and consult the county-wide community as to the course that is perceived to be the best for Harrison students. Top professionals in finance, business, education, and law have pledged their technical assistance along with their general participation and support. The strong consensus has been for Harrison to obtain independent status and continue to serve the county as a whole. Harrison students come from each of the school board districts. The student families in those districts are unified in their desire to maintain access to Harrison for their students as well as for Polk County students in the future.

Sincerely,



Anu Saxena
President
Harrison Parents Association



Barb Erickson
President-Elect
Harrison Parents Association



Steve Glover
Chair
Harrison Advisory Board



Sylvia Blackmon-Roberts
Vice-Chair
Harrison Advisory Board